

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Block Island School
October 15, 2012
7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, October 15, 2012, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Elizabeth Connor, Patricia Doyle, Ann Hall, Sean McGarry, and William Padien. Robert Hicks was also in attendance.

William Padien took a moment to show his appreciation to Sean McGarry, who was attending his last meeting as a School Committee member. Mr. Padien wished him luck on his run for Town Council, stating they had several battles over the years, but were able to remain friends. He added that it had been a pleasure working with him all these years. Ann Hall stated that Mr. McGarry brought a lot to the table and kept everyone on their toes. Mr. McGarry stated it had been an honor serving the Block Island School community; he learned so much and enjoyed the different experiences. All of the committee members wished him well.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (McGarry, Doyle) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 18, 2012, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Mr. Padien reported that the soccer tournament held at Heinz Field over the past weekend went well and was “a feather in the cap for our athletic program.”

Mr. Hicks submitted that NECAP science scores from last spring. Because of Block Island School’s small student population there were not enough students in each grade to report except for grade four. The state consolidates the results from across all grades and reports them with the other districts. Our results showed considerable growth in the percent of proficiency, but we weren’t singled out by the state because of our standard error of measurement.

The results of the short survey regarding the new schedule were reported Mr. Hicks: Parents were strongly in favor, but faculty and students, who were evenly divided, were generally not in favor. Most stated there was little or manageable inconvenience. Some teachers of younger students did not realize the added teaching time, some students are tired at the end of the day, and some students are having trouble getting homework done. Quite a few teachers felt it was too early to tell and to check back after the first of the year for a more in depth look.

The standing of accounts as of September 30, 2012, was submitted for review. Mr. Hicks stated that no projections have been included, but the report shows where the money is being spent. A motion (Padien, McGarry) to accept the fiscal report through September 30, 2012, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

New Business

An early graduation request has been received, but neither the deadline nor the GPA requirements of Policy FBF: Graduation Requirements have been met. Because of this Mr.

Hicks would not recommend the approval of the student's request, but it did raise an important policy question. If a student makes a strong case for reasons not currently listed in the policy should the administration be deciding who can graduate early? Our policy was written to allow students who demonstrate strong academic skills the opportunity to start post-secondary life early. Mr. Hicks stated he was uncomfortable seeking waivers to policy as decisions then become subjective and expose the school to being overruled on appeal for not following its own policy. He suggested that perhaps the policy should be changed to take the school out of the decision making process and leave it to parents and families. Committee members agreed they would prefer to change the policy rather than deciding to grant a waiver and suggested deleting numbers 1-4 under Early Graduation Program and rewording numbers 5 and 6. The committee encouraged the student to wait for the updated policy instead of seeking a waiver.

A motion (Connor, Padien) to delete Policy GM-1: Bullying because it was subsumed in the Safe and Peaceful School Community Policy (GK) carried with a vote of 5-0.

Correspondence was received from Jeana Rachels requesting permission to continue to home school her son for the 2012-2013 school year. A motion (Connor, Hall) to approve the home schooling request from Jeana Rachels subject to the conditions detailed in the plan developed by the parent, student, and school staff carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mr. Hicks submitted the contract/agreement with East Bay Educational Collaborative to provide professional development services in ELA Common Core that had previously been part of Karen Kurzman's supplemental contract. The cost, covered by our Title 1 funds, is slightly more on a per diem basis than last year, but the same rate the rest of the districts are paying. This will be part of our staff development day on November 12. A motion (Padien, Hall) to sign the agreement with EBEC carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

A meeting with the auditors has been scheduled for November 7, but a time has yet to be determined. The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 19, 2012.

Correspondence

Correspondence was received from soccer official Henry Veix complementing our players on their excellent sportsmanship.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:06 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: November 19, 2012